

Brooklyn Dec. 26, 1880

P. P.

And this Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached  
in all the world. for a witness unto all Nations. -

Mat 24. 14.

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Christmas Sermon

2012-010-032

Christianity addresses itself both to the individual  
and to society, It aims both to build up the  
Kingdom of God in the single soul - and to set  
all men in more perfect social, political and  
industrial relations one with another, - Naturally,  
its endeavor is addressed more particularly to the  
individual, since it is only through his spiritual  
development and enlightenment that the good of  
society can be reached, - Jesus did not teach his  
followers to meddle with political affairs, because  
he saw that there could be no new society until  
there were new men and women <sup>of whom</sup> to make that  
society, - He could have told the English Puritans  
that their attempt to set up a Christian Commonwealth  
by force of arms would fail, - But on the other  
hand he could have foreseen - what in the  
of history we now see - that the Puritans  
through the social  
spite of its appearance  
and remote  
addressed

the individual soul - but its aim does not stop<sup>2</sup>  
there. - It seeks out of the nobler manhood and  
womanhood it creates, to build a new state and  
society - whose foundations shall be as deep as the  
roots of human life itself - and whose extent shall  
be as broad as the whole world of human interests. -

Ordinarily every Christian ~~workman~~<sup>workman</sup> is like  
the single laborer upon some vast building.  
He sees little more than the single stone which  
it is given him to trim and put in place. -

But it is well for us sometimes to leave our  
special ~~work~~<sup>labors</sup> - and try to obtain some comprehensive  
view of the whole gigantic structure. - At this  
time when we celebrate the birth of one who  
began the greatest and most wide-reaching work  
of history - it is fitting that we should strive  
for some conception of the comprehensiveness of  
that undertaking. - I desire therefore to set  
forth in some measure, the universal character  
of the purpose and the work of Jesus of Nazareth. -

If one wishes to appreciate the amount of  
laboring and suffering which it cost the Jewish  
people, to preserve and maintain the germs of  
spiritual religion - let him consider the tenacity  
with which that people has clung to its  
race preeminence, throughout Christian history -  
in spite of the worst and longest persecution  
to which any people has ever been subjected, -

God makes nothing in vain, and the strength  
of resistance and endurance which this wonderful  
race has ~~the~~ displayed through the historic period,  
shows how strong they must have been, in  
order to do the work assigned them in the  
development of human life, - It is as if God  
had permitted them to live on ~~a~~ victims of the  
hottest tyranny and of the blindest bigotry and hate,  
to show the world what ~~it cost~~<sup>was</sup> to require to  
plant belief in and worship of one spiritual  
God, - - We stand before the ruins of ~~an~~<sup>an</sup> old  
Norman castle - and as we note its massive walls  
upon which time makes hardly the slightest impression,

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we say - what must have been the turbulence of the age,  
when men were obliged to house themselves in fastnesses  
like this. - So when we remark the unparalleled  
grip of the Jewish mind upon its customs, habits, and  
ideas, when we see how utterly ~~they~~<sup>it</sup> refuses to bend  
to any foreign influence, how - disperse them as  
widely as you will - and subject them to whatever  
oppression you please - the Jews are Jews still - and  
can never be anything else - while the world stands or  
they continue to exist, - seeing all this - one may  
declaim; what must have been the difficulty  
of bringing forward into modern history the idea of  
our God ruling over all that live - when such a character  
as this was created to accomplish that work! -  
When one turns to their history - (before our era) -  
he finds it indeed one continual fight with idolatry, -  
Time and again the worship of this and that deity -  
borrowed from surrounding nations - threatened to root  
out the worship of Jehovah, - Idolatrous practices invaded  
their very Temple, - Kings and Queens openly set  
up their golden images - and brought in their foreign  
priests, - But always the nation gained power to

shook off the Alien yoke and ~~reverted~~<sup>reverted</sup> to its  
own faith; - Its little territory was overrun by  
the armies of all the great Powers; - Its people ~~were~~  
were torn from their homes - and carried captive  
to distant lands; - They were subjected to all the  
seductive temptations, and all the hard pressure  
of fate which could lead them to renounce  
their faith, ~~and~~<sup>yet</sup> they were still Jews somewhere  
and under all circumstances, and nothing could  
induce them or force them to ~~renounce~~<sup>abandon</sup> their  
~~faith~~ religion; - It is a most marvellous spectacle  
All the nations of the earth - trampling by turns  
over this little flame that had been lighted in  
Judah - repeatedly beating it down into the dust,  
till seemingly no spark of it was left; and the  
flame as often breaking out again - as if lit by  
a miracle; - It was a flame which no flood of  
disaster could quench - for it was lighted in  
the hearts of a people who clung to their  
inheritance of faith as they clung to life  
itself; - -

Surely if nations ever have a mission - and are  
 ever fitted to do a certain work in the world. we may  
 say that the Jewish people had a mission to establish  
 the foundation of spiritual religion - and that they were  
 called into ~~that~~ being for that purpose. - A chosen people  
 they might well style themselves, for so they were; -  
 chosen to ripen a seed of ideas which was destined to  
 scatter itself through all lands - and plant itself in  
 every clime. - It was the bursting of the husk in  
 which this seed had been so long jealously held and  
 protected that early Christianity accomplished. - The  
 time came when the Nations of the south were  
 prepared to receive the truth and the spirit  
 that Judaism had kept hidden in its own heart,  
 and with it came the man, who was to  
 rend the wrappings of traditional exclusiveness -  
 and to send out to other lands - in the souls  
 of his disciples - the rich spiritual treasure  
 which the life of his people had gathered; - - And  
 this too was a work of pain and difficulty  
 which no man might undertake ~~without~~ <sup>and</sup> hope to

escape martyrdom, - - The vase in which the  
young germ of a universal faith had been planted  
had been made so strong to resist external  
dangers, that when ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> roots began to press  
outward it was strong to resist them also.

The Character which held off from its faith, the  
hate of foreign influence - was no less exerted  
to hold that faith close prisoner; - It was  
sacrilige to the Jew - to touch with ~~more~~ <sup>irreverent</sup> hands  
the customs and traditions which fenced him  
in from the gentile world, - If others would  
share his knowledge of God, let them come to him  
and adopt his national life, - - As for ~~putting~~ <sup>putting</sup>  
his knowledge of God into the life of other nations,  
the Jew had no conception of any such mission;

But to accomplish that very work - was the mission  
of Jesus of Nazareth, - He it was who broke  
through the prejudices of his people - and gave to  
mankind the precious legacy of a religion based  
upon the worship of one spiritual Deity. - -

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All this is what the panorama of history puts  
before our eyes, - and we know it without consulting  
the motions of Jesus - as they are revealed in his  
words, - If both the Jewish people and its Martyred  
Messiah had been blind instruments of fate, not  
knowing what work they were achieving - still this  
was the mission they did accomplish, - The Jews  
gave to the world the idea of God, - and gave  
it through the instrumentality of one whom they  
put to death as if he had been an enemy of their  
faith, - It was their Christ - whom they knew  
not - and killed as an impostor - who made them  
the benefactors of all future time, - - Let  
us consider for a moment what a gift this  
was, - In the first place it contained - and  
still contains the world's <sup>only</sup> hope of final and  
universal peace, - There never has been and never  
can be lasting peace between men, who worship  
different Gods, - where polytheism rules a  
community of interests can only be based upon the

decay of religion, - and since the ~~late~~ decay of  
religion has meant thus far in history - swift-national  
decline - tending toward extinction - we may conclude  
that this road will not lead to universal peace;  
where religion is a living power, it must by  
its very nature be intolerant of toward the worship  
of another God than its own, - If the Christian  
sees that the Buddhist or Mohammedan worship  
under another name - the same God whom he  
adores - he will regard their other religions with  
at least some degree of sympathetic interest, - But  
if the God of Arab ~~and~~ <sup>or</sup> Hindoo - is to him  
a false God, a deity other than his own.  
he will look upon the religion of Arab ~~and~~ <sup>or</sup>  
Hindoo - with abhorrence and contempt, - Then  
can be no peace - no brotherhood - no mutual respect -  
between the adherents of hostile religions, - The  
great ~~states~~ <sup>kingdoms</sup> of antiquity - composed of different  
races or tribes - were held together only by the  
clasp of a military despotism, and when these  
grew weak - the kingdoms quickly resolved themselves

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back into hostile fractions. - The true brotherhood of  
man only begins with the common recognition of one  
God who is the Father of all. - If the nation from  
which Christ sprung - has done nothing else for the world,  
it has given this condition and promise of Universal  
Unity and peace. - You will perhaps point to  
Christian wars, and ask what hope of a reign  
of good will Christian history affords? - But no  
idea at once takes possession of the <sup>European</sup> ~~Christian~~  
mind. - Its growth to power is very gradual. -  
Medieval race-fuels are dying out, and men are  
learning that they may find a better way to settle  
their disputes than by means of armed strife.  
The various races who worship the same God,  
are learning not to despise or hate each other,  
and there is promise of a time when peace and  
good will shall rule in veritable fact - and not  
in a far away dream only. - - At all events if  
we accept as a fact - what history seems to  
clearly teach, that no nation can ~~be~~ live without

religion, then it follows that, <sup>only</sup> when religion everywhere  
has its altar to one God, can the nations be at-  
peace among themselves. - I do not speak of the  
inevitable degradation of a polytheism, ~~and~~ <sup>on</sup> the  
impossibility of any general or long continued  
spiritual culture under its sign; - and do not  
attempt to show all the points of superiority in  
the Jewish conception of God, over every other that  
the ancient world had formed; - Let it suffice  
him as proof of the universal character of Christ's  
work, that he succeeded in planting amid the  
wreck of the world's decaying religions, that idea  
of God held by his people - which is one of  
the <sup>indispensable</sup> ~~universal~~ corner stones of a universal  
brotherhood - and which is slowly working out its  
peace-giving mission; -

The Jewish nation has, <sup>seen</sup> undoubtedly the  
blind instrument of Providence in this work; -  
It knew not its destiny or mission, but  
dreamed continually of a great theocratic empire  
surpassing in magnificence and power - the monarchies

to which <sup>it</sup> ~~they~~ had by ~~hims~~ been subjected: ~~They~~ <sup>They</sup> Jews? ~~they~~  
had no thought of importing to other powers the gift  
God had given them, but expected to be themselves the  
power which should give laws to all the earth. -  
~~Here Jesus~~ <sup>is</sup> They looked forward to a divinely  
appointed leader - with miraculous gifts - who should  
be the most splendid earthly sovereign yet seen;  
and <sup>who</sup> should extend their law and their religion over  
all nations; - Here Jesus was not <sup>at</sup> all the Messiah  
whom they had looked to see. - But he was  
nevertheless the Messiah whom ~~they~~ expected, and  
he knew <sup>perfectly well</sup> what God demanded of him; - Jesus was  
no blind agent of chance or fate. - The Messianic  
role which his people had assigned to him he  
utterly dis~~corded~~ <sup>corded</sup> - and walked by the light of his  
own perceptions - and the guidance of God's spirit: -  
He thoroughly comprehended the genius of his  
people; saw the world's need - and how that  
need was to be met, and marked out for  
himself - as the Messiah - a pathway which no one  
else had conceived of - and which he followed  
to the end. - The attempt to make Jesus fulfill

all the old prophecies concerning the messiah - is one  
in which the enlightened student of history can feel no  
interest. The fact is that he was a much nobler  
messiah than any of the prophets had imagined, -  
they felt that their nation had a mission to  
the world, and that in the fulness of time God would  
give them a leader, under whom that mission  
should be accomplished. But all their visions  
centred upon a temporal sovereignty. - Jesus knew  
better than they what the messiah should do  
and how he should accomplish his work; - If  
there were no evidence in his words, of his broader  
and clearer insight, his line<sup>of</sup> action would be  
enough to show us ~~a~~ with what wonderful  
intelligence he comprehended the mission of the  
messiah - and its purpose. - He undoubtedly saw  
that his people were not fitted for political power, -  
and that but they been - any earthly kingdom  
which they could establish would contain the  
seeds of its own destruction. - and would soon come  
to an end. - He saw that to reach the real  
springs of human life - he must go much deeper.

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and must inaugurate a movement - which would  
begin centuries for its full development; that if  
there was ever to be a new ~~set~~ and universal  
society. which should be a Kingdom of God on  
earth, the work must begin and go forward in  
the hearts and consciences of men; that not  
before but only after the human spirit had been  
brought into more accord with the divine spirit,  
could a pure law and ritual be made to  
stand - The fact that Christ's conception of  
the messianic work and office differs so  
entirely from the traditional view, shows that  
he must have thought all this out for himself -  
and ~~shows~~ <sup>displays</sup> the depth and breadth of his genius. -  
He was more than a tool in the hands of God. -  
He was one who knew the work he was doing -  
and foresaw its wide reaching effects. -

I have referred to the universal significance  
of the idea of God - which as the best and  
greatest prophet of his people - Jesus sent out as  
a missionary to other nations, and I cannot

that any intelligent reader of his life - cannot fail  
to see that Jesus meant that idea to reach the uttermost  
poles of the North; - If he said to the woman of Canaan  
"I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel,"  
he only stated the popular notion of his mission - for  
the purpose of testing her faith; - If when he sent  
out his disciples he bade them not to go to any  
city of gentile or Samaritan - it was only because he  
knew that the time was not ripe for that - and that  
first he must gather disciples - who should carry  
on his work, from among the Jews themselves.  
He had first to break ~~the~~ the bonds of tradition  
which held in the east he wished to scatter - and  
before then the seed would find its own way abroad; -

But - Jesus intended and declared, that the Gospel  
should be preached in all the world - for a witness  
to all nations; - and this was no purpose which  
slowly dawned upon him in the course of his  
ministry - as some have supposed; - He began  
his work with all his purposes fully formed; -  
and from his first public utterance until his last,

he never lost sight of the aim which included all  
mankind's future is made, - - He stood before Pilate  
during the final scene of his life - virtually acknowledging  
himself a King: - King of what and of whom? Of the  
little host of followers who crowded in the background  
afraid to acknowledge their discipleship. - The Jew? - But  
King of millions of hearts not yet moulded into  
flesh, - King for coming times when his thought  
of God and his idea of Love - as the Love making  
and binding power in human affairs - should  
sway the destinies of nations. - If he seemed ~~to~~ not  
to hear what Pilate said to him it was because his  
ears were filled with the happy anthems of peace and  
good will yet to <sup>be</sup> sung upon earth. - If he seemed not  
to see the rabble by which he was surrounded it  
was because his absorbed gaze looked through the  
mists of futurity - and was held by the vision  
of the great destiny of human kind. -

Jesus lived not for his own age alone - but for all  
ages. - not for the people of Israel ~~alone~~ <sup>only</sup> - but  
for all children of the Common Father. whom  
he took into the embrace of his boundless sympathy. -

Among the many witnesses of the growth and  
reach of the work which Jesus undertook - there is one  
other of which I should like to speak - viz. of the  
moralists by which he sought to establish a new  
morality - and upon which he depended, as the means  
of enforcing his law upon the attention of his  
followers. - There have been from the first two

classes by which they who have seen the law of  
righteousness, have endeavored to secure for it  
their sanction; - The instrument of one has  
been Authority - and of the other Philosophy -  
in modern <sup>philosophy</sup> ~~knowledge~~ - Moral Science -

One class of moralists depend upon connecting  
the moral law with some symbol of power - civil  
or ecclesiastical - which shall compel the respect,  
of lawless instincts and passions; - - How certainly  
the world cannot get on without authority. The  
Magistrate must have the means of enforcing his  
judgements - whether people are inclined to  
obey them or not; and in the present state  
of the world there are multitudes, who need the

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form of command which the priest holds over them  
to keep them within bounds of social order. - But  
authority alone - can neither lift morality to any higher  
level - nor even ~~of~~ long preserve itself from the attacks  
of vicious inclinations, - Under its rule there is no  
strengthening of the moral sentiments - and if a people  
cease to love virtue - no moral authority can be  
made to stand, - They will find out that the judge  
is amenable to the strength of numbers - and that  
the excommunications and anathemas of the priest do  
not hurt, - and then priest and judge might as  
well abdicate their offices, -

On the other hand - another class of moralists  
have thought to set the world right by logically  
showing it the superiority of right conduct, -  
Their labors too have great value, - The world will  
not long continue in darkness as a land of moral  
anarchy some good reason for it can be assigned, -  
But philosophy alone is weak - because it  
appeals only to a feeble and indirect measure of  
the affections, - No matter how well you may

conscience, the ~~best~~ heart, if the heart has a strong love of evil - the life will be evil - spite of philosophy; - know a system of moral philosophy is only suited <sup>to</sup> the mind of a limited period - and a limited portion of mankind; - From generation to generation it must have new statement - and require an army of critics, who ~~work~~ <sup>work</sup> it over and apply it in new forms. - It is hard to - to transplant philosophy from one race to another. The words in which it was originally cast have no exact parallel in other languages, and its mood - or mode of thought must be always somewhat foreign to another people - - On the whole there is slight hope of any universally received philosophy - and if there were, it would be of slight avail against powerful affections and desires. - -

What then did Jesus teach, as a means of reaching harmonious conduct - and conforming it to the law of God? - For that was the great purpose of his life; - what was in the mind of his people and

Aspiration or desire - become with him a passionate  
longing to lift the life of man to the plane of  
pure and spiritual morality; -- He was <sup>strongly</sup> a philosopher  
~~and might~~ <sup>to</sup> have given a philosophy. - That is to say  
he had a rare power of discussing fundamental ideas &  
principles, and he was not wanting in power to build  
up his thought from premises to conclusions. There  
are ~~moments~~ in some of his disputes with the  
Phonians touching of the dialectic ~~method~~ - which would  
do credit to Plato <sup>or</sup> ~~and~~ Socrates - and which display  
the steady firmness and quickness of perception. -

Or Jesus might have given a new code of laws -  
and provided an authority to uphold it. - He that  
can be so long led his action with him instead  
of against him, for this was precisely what they  
expected the Messiah to do. -- Yet Jesus did not  
attempt to link his teaching with authority - and he  
did not formulate a philosophy. -- Because he saw  
that there was a more easy way to reach the hearts of  
men. - He saw that nothing so rouses the emulation  
of the soul - as a noble example. - That virtue itself

in its concrete form - as it is lived out before the  
eyes of men is the most powerful and convincing  
of all moral teachers; - ~~He~~ He saw that while  
authority ~~would~~ grow weak with age; - while <sup>a</sup> philosophy  
would only be well understood by the people and  
the time in which it originated; - A divine example,  
would never grow old - or lose its hold upon the heart  
of man; - would be perfectly understood in every  
language - and would appeal with equal force to the  
conscience of every age; - I say this because  
and this - because there is wisdom <sup>in</sup> what  
he said, and because - on no other supposition  
can the attitude he assumed be made intelligible,  
He chose to rest his hope of winning the world  
to a higher life - by being himself a living  
illustration of all that is pure and exalted, Did he  
not know that the heroes of the ~~former~~ <sup>past</sup> world -  
long before there was any literature to perpetuate  
their ~~names~~ <sup>names</sup> had lived on in the memories of  
men - constantly inviting them to heroic lives? -  
He would be himself such a guide to those who  
were to come after him; - He would give the world

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an example of purity and self-sacrifice - of boundless  
love - of tireless patience - of calm forbearance - and  
heroic fortitude - which should ~~forever~~ be as a beacon  
to humanity struggling toward the right - and should  
rouse <sup>an enthusiastic zeal for holiness in</sup> ~~the~~ every soul which looked upon it; ~~to~~

He would leave behind him, no crumbling scepter  
of earthly sovereignty - ~~which~~ to fall into incompetent  
and dissolute hands; - no philosophic system - to  
be misread - misunderstood and finally forgotten; - He  
would leave a deathless name - linked with all  
that is great and sublime in human life; - ~~and~~  
the record of <sup>a</sup> blameless soul which never faltered  
in its trust and obedience; a picture of life  
devoted to God's service - which all hearts from  
the highest to the humblest could understand -  
and which time should have no power to dim; -

It is eighteen centuries and more - since  
he who formed this purpose and lived this life -  
sealed it by a martyrdom - whose symbol has become  
one of the proudest and most universal emblems of  
all time; Does it appear that his choice of means

was poorly made - or that his expectations were too large for fulfillment? - Has he not done what he set out to do - and does not the course of history show - how accurately he had gauged the super currents of human life - how well he knew to reach and influence the universal heart of the race? - I have alleged in illustration

of the scope of Christ's genius and work - these two considerations, - 1<sup>st</sup>; that he intelligently undertook to give to the world at large - that idea of God till then peculiar to his own people - as the basis of a universal society; - and 2<sup>nd</sup>; that he chose to preach the Kingdom of God in deeds - that should be everywhere told, and that should be a source of inspiration whenever they were made known, - These considerations do not begin to be a measure of his purpose or his mission, <sup>and these</sup> ~~and these~~ to be well set forth ~~there~~ need a much wider space than could be here afforded. - But are not these few rough outlines of a character, and its influence, hints of a figure and a work not to be found elsewhere

in all history? - What imperial Caesar - with <sup>13</sup>  
the world under his feet - but master only of an  
empire whose limits soon narrow into nothingness;  
What world-renowned creator of a literature,  
the whose thought becomes obsolete - and whose  
work is only known and studied in after ages  
by the curious few; - What Post-Inventor - soldier  
or statesman - will you set beside this son of  
Israel's kingly line, - who becomes more and more  
a power behind every throne, and whose Gospel  
preached in all the earth, gives him a living and  
ever widening influence among the nations.

Then are lands still closed against the  
missionary and the discoverer, where this Gospel  
has been preached - and when it has stirred the  
sluggish pulses of semi-barbarism, to emulation  
of ~~the~~ pure and noble deeds, - No Island of  
the sea is so remote - no heart of a Continent  
is so inaccessible - that the Christian Missionary  
has not found it out, - and no matter what  
half pagan creed or ritual he may carry there

there is underneath it; the ~~story~~ of a life  
which has vastly more power than church  
dogmas or sacraments - and <sup>which</sup> does kindle a  
new flame of moral and spiritual life. —

It is no longer a daring prediction - that the day  
shall come - when every heart of man shall know  
the story of Christ's life - and when the universal  
Father in whom he trusted - and by whom he was  
guided - shall be worshipped and obeyed by all  
that live, — — — His Gospel is preached in all  
the earth. It remains only that his teaching  
and example shall slowly root out the  
heathenism which so long survives - even under  
the Christian name; - and foster the spiritual  
side of human nature, till all men have so  
grown to be citizens of God's Kingdom - that their  
statute books - and their Congress - shall  
subordinate God's law. —